

PUBLIC COMMENTS
2-GATES FISH PROTECTION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

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It is clear from the USBR public meeting at Discovery Bay on 10/27, and from the FONSI documents, that the impact on Discovery water quality and on recreational boaters in general is not understood. The documents were admittedly prepared by the Metropolitan Water of Southern California in order to increase water exports to southern California. The documents are designed to result in “No Significant Impact” to avoid preparing a full Environmental Impact Report, and to rush the project to approval. Comments are due NLT 11/17/09, which is wholly inadequate for our local governmental agencies to respond to. Following is a synopsis of my comments:

- Recreational Boating and Safety. Types of boats, volume of boats, and boat maneuverability are not understood nor addressed by the draft FONSI document. The design of the gates create a significant safety issue for boating.
 - Due to lengthy delays between gate openings (two to ten hours), queues of boats, and their lack of maneuverability will create collision hazards. Single screw trawlers, house boats and sail boats all have high windage problems and must maintain a speed of at least 3 knots to maintain maneuverability.
 - The water velocity, upon opening the gates, will significantly affect maneuverability of boats, increasing the potential for collision and capsizing, especially for the boats mentioned above.
 - The design of the gate structure provides catwalks to the pivot point of the gates. When opened, water flowing through the non-navigable portion of the butterfly gate openings will suck disabled or slow water craft, or boaters not knowledgeable of the gate design under the catwalks, producing a significant safety hazard, including capsizing and / or decapitation.
 - The channels – 75’ and 60’, respectively, are very narrow for large queues of boats and impatient boaters attempting to pass each other in opposite directions.
 - The only alternative out of Discovery Bay is through the Bacon Island Bridge, which has limited hours and needs frequent repairs. This route adds three hours each way to our trawler type boat.
 - Delays to emergency equipment – sheriff and Coast Guard rescues, levee repair barges, etc. have not been studied.
 - The low profile Connection Slough gate could be confused with the close proximity Connection Slough Bridge and be missed by unsuspecting boaters who could then ram the gate.
 - Therefore, I believe a Finding of No Significant Impact is incorrect.

- Water Quality. Many Delta communities rely on well water or water drawn directly from the delta. Local farmers use siphoning to irrigate their crops. The meeting

participants admitted, and the report does not contain a study of the effect on water quality on Discovery Bay. Discovery Bay is a community of over 10,000 people, many of whom live on the water through a network of back bays. We rely on the flushing action of the tides to keep out water swimmable and fresh.

- We need adequate water depth for our berths and navigation. Based on the FONSI, water depth could drop 18” in Discovery Bay. Our 48’ sail boat requires a minimum depth of 6’. This would not be achieved Indian Slough, nor Kellogg Creek.
 - We need adequate water depth in order to siphon water out of our back bays (into the golf course) to keep them fresh. A loss of depth could prevent this.
 - Discovery Bay discharges its effluent from our sewage treatment plant into Old River. We need flushing to keep it clean.
 - Our sloughs contain mercury, selenium and pesticides. We need flushing to keep these contaminants at a level safe for humans.
 - We need flushing action to prevent algae blooms and their attendant impact on fish populations.
 - Therefore, I believe a Finding of No Significant Impact is incorrect. Furthermore, the short comment period (21 days from informational meeting) is wholly inadequate for our local CSD and Reclamation District to respond to.
- Impact of Increased Pumping. Let’s face it. The purpose of the 2-Gates is to increase pumping to southern California. The study has not addressed the environmental effects of:
 - Population growth of southern California, and its attendant environmental impacts.
 - Additional irrigation in the Westlands Water District, whose lands contain high levels of selenium that leach out of the soils and end up in the San Joaquin River / Delta.
 - Added salinity in the Delta, affecting local farmers and culinary water.
 - Therefore, I believe a Finding of No Significant Impact is incorrect.
 - Economic Impact. The gates are dams during much of the year, posing a significant impact to Discovery Bay, Franks Tract and beyond.
 - Boating in the Delta contributes millions of dollars to California’s economy. Dam closings at unadvertised times will adversely impact commerce.
 - When we built our home, waterfront lots commanded a \$500,000 premium. Loss of property values due to degraded water quality and boat access was not addressed by the study.
 - Therefore, I believe a Finding of No Significant is incorrect.
 - Lack of notification. Notification of the comment period was made only in local papers with limited circulation and readership. No notification was made in Bay Area papers where thousands of boaters use the Delta on weekends. Therefore, the comment period should be extended, and outreach made to all beneficiaries of our wonderful Delta.